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SOME SUGGESTIONS *to* UNIVERSITY WOMEN *as to the* CHOICE *of a* CAREER

Peterson

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STUDENT CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT
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MANY who read the strange experiences of two Englishwomen at Versailles, recently recorded in *An Adventure*, must have found the desire to see the past, as it really was, stirred into a new activity. As we saw them surrounded by the figures of an earlier century, the question perhaps presented itself: Which would be best worth seeing—the past of a hundred years ago or the future of a hundred years to come? Judging by the rate at which practical science is advancing and vast portions of the race are changing, so much of surprise would be involved in the fulfilment of the latter wish that we might well hesitate to choose it. But one thing is, I think, certain, that the knowledge of the world as it will be a hundred years

hence would, for many university women, affect the choice of a career, supposing that career still to choose.

With the view of throwing light on such a choice, I wish to suggest some fairly certain changes which the next hundred years may see. I am not thinking of the perfecting of aeroplanes or of new and marvellous methods of communication that may make even wireless telegraphy cumbrous and out of date, but rather of the vast changes that are sometimes silently, sometimes noisily, but always without intermission, proceeding among the dense and highly civilised populations of those regions which for convenience we still call the Far East—although they are "far" no longer. These changes will profoundly influence the whole human race and our own portion of it. What will be the character of the ruling forces, a hundred years later, in a world that has even now become "a single neighbourhood," when anything that happens anywhere will still more inevitably and intimately affect the whole?

We all know something of a subject almost hackneyed now—the crisis and awakening in the East. Probably most of us know that we are living in presence of such rapid and momentous changes over enormous areas as the world has never seen before. Matthew Arnold's well-

known words about "the patient deep disdain" with which the East endured the march of Western forces in Roman days were, but a few years ago, as true in principle as they were 2,000 years ago. But within a generation one Eastern Power—Japan—has, with an energy, an enterprise, an ability and a thoroughness which are simply amazing, opened every door to Western influences, reorganised her whole civilisation, and placed herself as a rival, and a victorious rival, among the great Western Powers.

Still more amazing, still more portentous and more pregnant of meaning for the world, is the vast change in the country which, long centuries ago, civilised Japan, the upheaval in the 2,000-year-old civilisation—religion, learning, commerce, economics, custom—of China, where a population of 400 millions, shaken at last from their dignified and conservative self-conceit, have flung wide the doors shut for ages, and are now almost scrambling for the Western knowledge that is pouring in. A correspondent from China says that up till yesterday the work of the Christian teacher might be compared "to pulling down granite fortifications with the finger-nails"; whereas now "a breach has suddenly been made by an earthquake." The secret of this change is the fact that for a hundred years China, the proudest and most exclusive of all great nations,

has been suffering successive cruel indignities at the hand of Western peoples. A few years ago Lord Charles Beresford's book, *The Break-up of China*, represented what was in all men's minds. The vast resources of the country seemed to lie passive for any hands on the alert to seize the choicest portions.

The rise of Japan, and Japan's victory over Russia, aroused the Chinese from their proud and lethargic despair. What Japan, the mere offspring of ancient Chinese civilisation, could do, China could do better. But first, to be a match for the hated and despised foreigner, China must abjure the opium poison, and learn the arts and science of the West. And we all know that China is doing that. All over her vast territory the growth of the poppy, a source of great wealth, is ceasing. Distinguished civil servants are said to have actually died in giving up the habit of a lifetime. The old examination halls in her ancient cities, whither students have come for centuries, have been demolished, and modern institutions built. Schools are covering the country and railways threading it. In ten years, it is said, China, the most conservative of nations, has done more towards making herself a Great Power, in the modern sense, than Japan did in four generations. Probably in far less than a hundred years, the Chinese, according

to the best judges of that highly gifted people, will certainly have become, if not the greatest, yet among the greatest of the world-powers. What ideas and influences will be ruling a nation which is to hold so large a place in the councils of the world? What will all this mean to the generation of Anglo-Saxon children who will be the sons and daughters of the boys and girls at school to-day?

We must think, too, of India. The tide of nationalist feeling that has characterised the last quarter of a century in both West and East has risen in India, and is almost breaking bounds. Has India not her part to play in the world's history? If not by military conquest, why not by spiritual? Deep in the heart of some of the best of the natives of India is the conviction that there are hidden in her people powers that fit her to be the spiritual mistress of the world. And yet the education given by our Government to India, first established by mid-Victorian Liberals in the sincere belief that knowledge alone was enough for character, and excluding all religious teaching, has sent forth thousands of young Hindus, their brains stored with facts, their old controlling convictions and sanctions gone for ever, their characters too often without strength, their minds open to every vicious suggestion, and their lives so purposeless as to constitute them an

actual danger to the State. Everyone who knows India knows that the coming half-century will see radical changes for good or evil—a good or evil which will deeply affect the West as well as the East.

No one can rise from the perusal of two very different books, *Things as They Are*, by Miss Carmichael, and Mr. Valentine Chirol's articles contributed to the *Times*, and now collected under the title *Indian Unrest*, without profound apprehensions as to the future in India and our relation to it.

Such are some of the changes proceeding in the East where mighty non-Christian civilisations are re-shaping themselves for good or evil, and, now that distance has disappeared, must in the future profoundly influence our Western world. A little while ago a body of Japanese students sent a telegraphic message to a body of Europeans—"Japan is leading the Orient, but *whither?*" In China alone a quarter of the whole human race has been of a sudden thrown violently open to external influences of the deepest and most penetrating sort.

Into the sad and perplexing mass of problems which modern Africa presents to the thoughtful and sympathetic observer we cannot enter here. Suffice it to say that the English people are now the dominant influence over vast

tracts peopled by millions of human beings in that rapidly changing continent.

We must ask ourselves what responsibility is ours in face of all these shifting scenes where good and bad together are being swept into the same current. Surely the whole Western world, which has (too often with ruthless selfishness) enriched itself at the expense of the Eastern and the African, stands convicted of a deep debt of responsibility to both. The English people cannot learn the facts of our connection with the opium traffic without a stinging sense of shame and an impulse to give back in some form or other those elements of life, physical, moral, and spiritual, of which this poisonous drug has, for half a century, been draining the Chinese.

Of our responsibility to India, where the disinterested and effective work already accomplished is only exceeded by the amount and quality of the work still called for, I have no need to speak, except to say that present conditions are, year by year, increasing such needs as can and ought to be supplied by us.

The question at once arises: How can we help? And the answer of all who know is that the one obvious need of these peoples is a sound and careful education inspired with spiritual faith and spiritual ideals. Western education from the lowest to the highest grades is their

own importunate demand, and a demand that will certainly be somehow supplied. But their ruling motive for desiring education at present is the resolve to obtain material advancement, to rival the West in all the practical arts and sciences, together with the impulse (so strongly felt by the people of India) to realise themselves as nationalities.

In China, thousands of temples have been turned into schools—a significant fact—and a system of education (on paper at least) as thorough-going and far-reaching as that which has remodelled Japan will soon be in vogue. China is now looking for help in this work in two directions, to Japan and to Christian Missions. Japan sends anything but her best material to China, and there is imminent danger that practical materialism of a vicious sort will sweep over China, and influence all her educational effort. In Christian countries there exist strong contrary currents which check materialistic selfishness, but in a vast non-Christian society which is rapidly revolutionising itself, these often seem entirely absent. The ancient cults have in times past at least kept open the door into the invisible and eternal, however full that region has been of dread and of deception. But one thing is certain—that at the breath of Western Science these ancient faiths fade and die. They

cannot co-exist, in any living force, with Western progress. How then can education be permeated with those spiritual aims and spiritual ideas, without which, as the results of Government education in India have already shown, a school and college course is often worse than none? The secular system in India has borne bitter fruit; influential Hindus and Mohammedans are in many districts of India starting schools of their own with an attempted religious basis, and the Government is showing a new sympathy with Christian mission schools.

Those who know the facts tell us that the one hope of infusing spiritual elements into the national life so rapidly transforming itself is the Christian religion. Christianity is a universal religion, and has been proved to flourish and to bring to birth new life, new hopes, and new ideals in every quarter of the globe. The Christian was a "new type" of man in the Roman Empire when first the Faith began to acclimatise itself in every portion of the known world. Christian missions, in spite of incredible obstacles, have, in the same way, and with the same power, produced this "new type" in the East—men and women who are strong, pure, and unselfish, animated by the Spirit of Christ Himself. Moreover, the Christian faith has been proved to co-exist with modern progress; in-

deed, every country which has been the natural home of progress, as the word is usually understood, has been animated at its heart by the religion that faces evil and acknowledges it, and yet implants hope and energy in the soul.

Now it is impossible for Christian education in mission areas to cope with the present need as a whole. But what is required, under the sudden strain of modern conditions, is that every mission-centre should be the seat of an education that is sound, thoroughly efficient, adapted to the real wants of the pupils, and carefully and systematically graded. It is now realised that the chief efforts in Christian education must be concentrated on the native Church, so that native Christian leaders, teachers, preachers, and parents may be so trained that they will take up the wider work which, as a whole, the foreigner can never even attempt. Hence the call, always urgent for help of all kinds, is now not so urgent for preachers or mission workers, or even for medical practitioners, as it is for highly trained and competent teachers. The work to be done by Christian educators in the East now presents a scope and a possible result on the future of the world such as can hardly be matched in history, and which certainly cannot be equalled in the West. The scope is such, because, in the first place, the de-

mand for good education has never been so great, and, in the second place, because the supporters of Christian missions have now realised that the main energy and the largest outlay must be expended on the development of their educational institutions, and are appealing for teachers whose talents in organisation and administration, as well as in teaching, are second to none employed at home.

The result is of so large a possibility because of the vast number of human minds and souls who have suddenly become sensitive to new impressions, and who in the next twenty years will have taken on some settled mould. A Chinese professor said at the Edinburgh Conference (1910) that the minds of his people were empty now, but in five years they might be filled and "blocked to Christianity." Is the character of the new civilisations to be moulded by an unchecked and unexampled pursuit of selfish success, or is this new world to be infused with the spiritual aspirations and spiritual hopes inseparable from the Christian Faith? That will, humanly speaking, depend on whether foreign mission centres obtain the help of Christian men and women who add tact and sympathy to thorough educational competence.

It is important to remember a fact which has been impressed on the minds of those experts

who are interpreting to us the demands of the East. This is the fact that, of all educational needs, what calls for most attention, most enthusiasm, and most powers of mind, and to-day presents the largest scope and promise, is the education of girls and women. The Bishop of Oxford, Chairman of the Commission which prepared a Report on missionary education for the Conference at Edinburgh, after months of investigation of the subject, said, with the approval of all his colleagues in the work, that this department was of "transcendent" and "supreme" importance. Only by the education of women can Christianity become indigenous in the East, and till Christianity becomes indigenous, we face a problem which, as a whole, is hopeless. However cribbed, cabined, and confined the custom of the Eastern nations has made their women, yet women still hold the key of their nation's faith, and, consequently, of national advance.

"Men," says a witness from the East, "lord it over the women in material things; women lord it over the men in spiritual things."

Besides this fact, surely the advantages which under the influence of the Spirit of Christ have been slowly and surely won for women in the West are in sufficiently strange and appalling contrast to the life of a typical Eastern woman.

Till one hears from a Christian Hindu lady of high caste what life means to thousands of her own class in India, of its meagreness, its terrors, of the enforced feebleness of all moral qualities, and the crippled and perverse imagination, I do not think it is possible to realise the full appeal to the sympathies and the energies of the Christian teacher.

Western customs and Western enlightenment are beginning to affect the position of women in the East, but we must remember that it took a generation of careful and conservative advance, guided by wise and patient reformers, to give to English women their present secure status. What is likely to be the result of a sudden upheaval of millennial custom and tradition affecting the inmost core of national existence, unless the girls of the nation are carefully trained for their new sphere by cultivated Western women who realise the specific dignity and the spiritual vocation of womanhood?

A freedom which does not conserve the best elements in home life and native sentiment will not only be a disaster to the nation and the world, but will end in worse disaster for the women themselves.

We hear that the children of school age in China number some 50 millions. We know that only about 4,000 Chinese girls are to-day in non-

Roman* Christian schools, and even these scattered centres are eagerly appealing for expert help. Yet Chinese girls have proved capable of a first-rate education, though for a long time to come the practical necessity of early marriage will make the training of future wives and mothers the most important work. The education of Indian girls needs, above all, the attention of wise and sympathetic and able Englishwomen, who can point out where this education should differ from that of boys.

How can such facts as these affect the choice of a career in the mind of a fully qualified professional Englishwoman, especially of one who has chosen the career of a teacher, and who is inspired with an ambition to serve her generation by extending the influence of the Kingdom of God? Surely when such a woman recognises anything like the truth in regard to the critical changes now passing over so large a part of the world—changes and opportunities unique in history—she will at least consider whether it may not be well worth while to throw her energies into the moulding of that which is to come forth from the vast melting-pot wherein whole nations have been cast.

* Statistics of Roman Catholic schools are difficult to obtain.

Our life passes very quickly, and the groove in which it runs is often narrow enough. In any case, be it wide or narrow, numerous candidates throng to fill the vacant posts at home. Might not one at least of these have with advantage looked further afield? The life of personal faith can give sky to our pictures, interest to our work, and romance to our routine; but amid the almost incredible difficulties of mission work abroad, vision and interest and romance must, to a rare degree, in hours of insight surround the work of those who in this generation have felt the call of the East, and have been privileged to put skilled hands to the building of vast new temples rising there, *ad majorem Dei gloriam.*

Some are hindered from offering to help in this work by the belief that the age-limit is very low. But this is not true. The invaluable experience of women who have been teaching for some years would often more than counterbalance some loss of power for the rapid mastery of a new language, and of the greater adaptability of youth.

Everyone who is sadly conscious of his own deficiencies in Christian practice, knowledge, and experience must naturally feel how solemn a thing it is to accept the responsibility of being the representative, and sometimes the sole representative, of Christian life and thought to those

who have never before come into contact with our most holy Faith. Even the greatest saint might well shrink back before a task so difficult and so heavily fraught with meaning for the costly and delicate material on which he has to work. But God has appointed (so far as we see) no other means of advancing His Kingdom on earth than these same faulty human agents, and in this conflict no soldier "goeth a warfare any time at his own charges." If men and women have heard the call that bids them enter upon this work, they have no choice but to obey, in humble confidence that, as the Spirit of God has summoned them to this ministry, so there will be given to them "the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge . . . by the same Spirit."

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